Steve Pettit MMR # 341 Biography

I've always been into trains and railroads & I guess I started with a Lego train set when I was about 5-6 years old

My parents bought me some HO / OO trains which were a mix of Hornby British prototype and Tyco US models. I didn't gravitate towards the British trains cos at that age I thought they looked too "posh" and nothing like the trains I saw in the "Model Railroader" & "Trains" magazines that our school librarian so kindly subscribed to just for my interest

It was all fixed down onto the standard 4 x 8 sheet of ply and hung on a garage wall whilst not in use

I joined the NMRA in 1995 after being a lone wolf modeler since my teenage years

I had started building my HOn3 Chamatiago & Southern just prior to becoming an NMRA member and I recall talking with the late Jack Macmicking (NMRA Div 7 Registrar) on the phone who put me in touch with 4-5 other HOn3 modelers who lived not far from me.

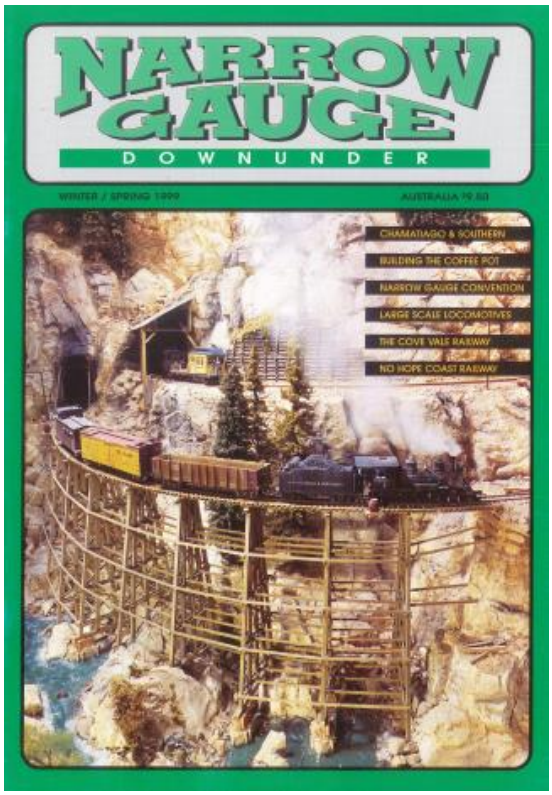
In my opinion the best value of being an NMRA member are and the interaction / sharing of information and techniques between members and the lifelong friendships that ensue

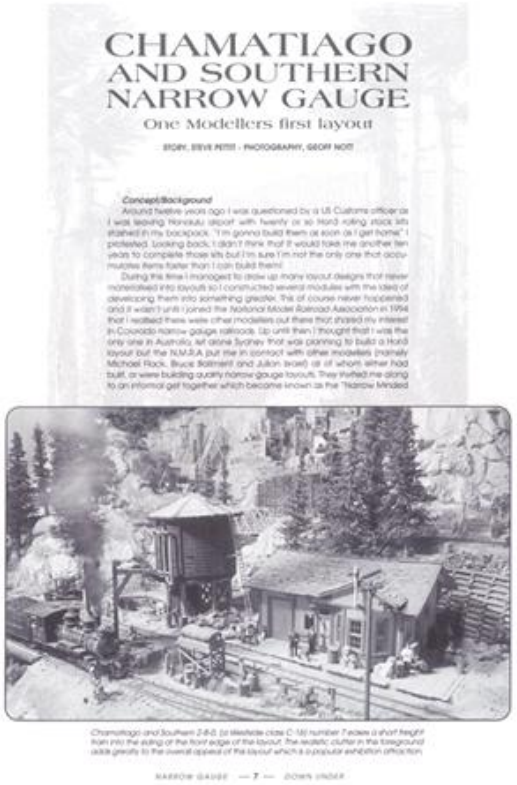
1996-1999

Chamatiago & Southern

Refer also NGDU Winter / Spring 1999

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ANv4vVxARs





CHAMATIAGO AND SOUTHERN NARROW GAUGE

One Modellers first layout

STORY: STEVE PETTIT - PHOTOGRAPHY: GEOFF NOTT

Concept/Background

Around twelve years ago I was questioned by a US Customs officer as I was leaving Honolulu airport with twenty or so Hon3 rolling stock kits stashed in my backpack. "I'm gonna build them as soon as I get home" I protested. Looking back, I didn't think that it would take me another ten years to complete those kits but I'm sure I'm not the only one that accumulates items faster than I can build them!

During this time I managed to draw up many layout designs that never materialised into layouts so I constructed several modules with the idea of developing them into something greater. This of course never happened and it wasn't until I joined the National Model Railroad Association in 1994 that I realised there were other modellers out there that shared my interest in Colorado narrow gauge railroads. Up until then I thought that I was the only one in Australia, let alone Sydney that was planning to build a Hon3 layout but the NMRA put me in contact with other modellers (namely Michael Rack, Bruce Baltmant and Julian Ivatt) all of whom either had built, or were building quality narrow gauge layouts. They invited me along to an informal get together which became known as the "Narrow Minded

Chamatiago and Southern 2-8-0, (a Westside class C-16) number 7 leaves a short freight train into the siding of the front edge of the layout. The realistic clutter in the foreground adds greatly to the overall appeal of this layout which is a popular exhibition attraction.

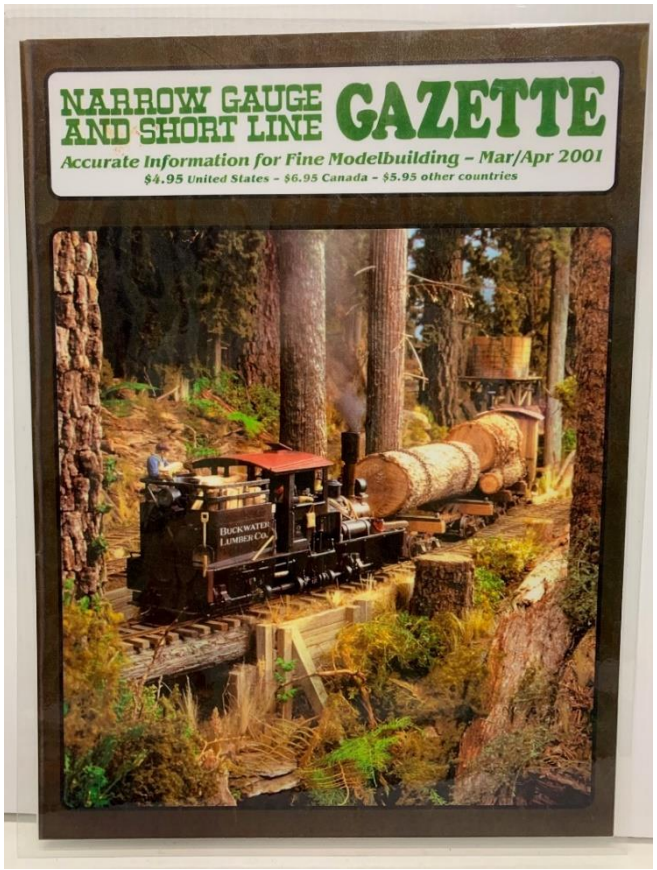
NARROW GAUGE — 7 — DOWN UNDER

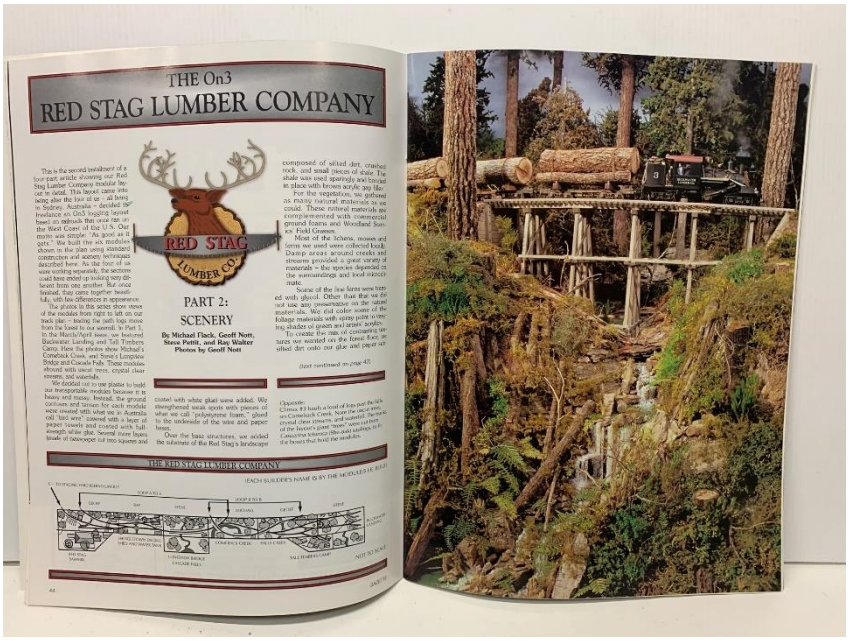
2000-2004

Red Stag Lumber Co.

https://nmra.org.au/red-stag-lumber-company-on3/

The late Geoff Nott and I became good friends and discovered that we shared a common interest in fine scale modelling, so I was very keen when Geoff suggested that he & I should build an exhibition layout together. The layout was to be known as the "Red Stag Lumber Co." built in On3 and was initially 4 x sections but this soon expanded along with our plans and then two fellow modelers (Micheal Flack & Ray Walter expressed an interest in working with us. The layout evolved into a large-scale diorama style that required us to hire an 8 tonne Pantech truck to take to model railroad exhibitions and conventions. We were lucky enough to be featured in "Narrow Gauge & Shortline Gazette" in 2001 over four separate issues and "Narrow Gauge Down Under" The layout was well received across the many shows it attended, but the sheer weight of each section took its toll on the four of us – Geoff had a talent for using real shale outcroppings that looked sensational but came with the weight factor that took a physical toll on us !!


NARROW GAUGE AND SHORT LINE GAZETTE
Accurate Information for Fine Modelbuilding – Mar/Apr 2001
$4.95 United States – $6.95 Canada – $5.95 other countries



THE On3

RED STAG LUMBER COMPANY

PART 2:

SCENERY

By Michael Flack, Geoff Nott, Steve Pettit, and Ray Walther

Photos by Geoff Nott

This is the second installment of a four-part article showing our Red Stag Lumber Company modular layout in detail. This layout came into being after the four of us – all living in Sydney, Australia – decided that freelance an On3 logging layout based on railroads that once ran on the West Coast of the U.S. Our motto was simple: "As good as it gets." We built the six modules shown in the plan using standard construction and scenery techniques described here. As the four of us were working separately, the sections could have ended up looking very different from one another. But once finished, they came together beautifully, with few differences in appearance.

The photos in this series show views of the modules from right to left on our track plan – leaving the path logs move from the lowest to our warmest. In Part 1, in the March/April issue, we featured Buckwater Landing and Tall Timbers Camp. Here the photos show Michael's Comstock Creek and Steve's Longview Bridge and Cascade Falls. These modules abound with uncut trees, crystal clear streams and waterfalls.

We decided not to use plaster to build our scenic modules because it is heavy and of limits. Instead, the ground contours were formed for each module were covered with what we in Australia call fast-setting cement with a layer of paper towels and coated with full-strength white glue. Several more layers made of newspaper cut into squares and coated with white glue were added. We strengthened weak spots with pieces of what we call "polystyrene foam," glued to the underside of the base and paper mesh.

Over the base structures, we added the substrate of the Red Stag's landscape composed of silted dirt, crushed rock, and small pieces of shale. The shale was used sparingly and formed in place with brown acrylic gap filler. For the vegetation, we gathered as many natural materials as we could. These natural materials are complemented with commercial ground foams and Woodland Scenics Field Grasses.

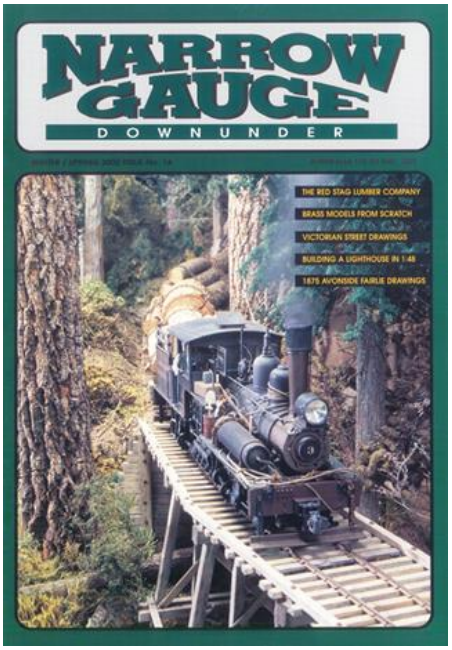
Most of the lichens, mosses and ferns we used were collected locally. Damp areas around creeks and streams provided a good variety of materials – the species depended on the surroundings and local microclimate.

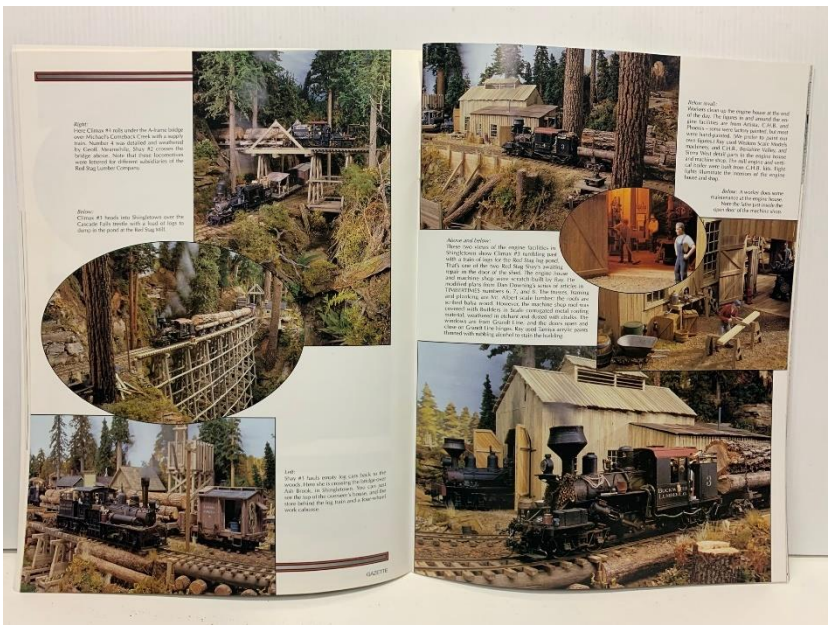
Some of the low ferns were treated with glycol. Other than that we did not use any preservation on the natural materials. We did color some of the foliage materials with spray paints in varying shades of green and artists' acrylics.

To create the rats of containing textures we sanded on the forest floor, sifted dirt onto our glue and paper substrate.

Start continued on page 42.

Opposite:
Climax #3 hauls a load of logs past the rock outcrops on Comstock Creek. Note the vertical strata on the rock face, and the rock-strewn, crystal clear stream. Logs and sawdust from the lumber camp above have fallen into the water, adding to the realism.





Right:
Here Climax #4 rolls under the A-frame bridge over Michael's Comstock Creek with a supply train. Number 4 was detailed and weathered by Geoff. Meanwhile, Shay #2, crosses the bridge above. Note that Pond locomotive were lettered for different subdivisions of the Red Stag Lumber Company.

Below:
Climax #3 heads into Shingletown over the Cascade Falls trestle with a load of logs to dump in the pond at the Red Stag Mill.

Above and below:
These two views of the engine facilities in Shingletown show Climax #3 fuelling and with a train of logs for the Red Stag log pond. That's one of the two Red Stag Ryan's awaiting repair in the door of the shed. The engine house is a modified Walthers kit, and the shop is a modified plans from Dan Demerjian's series of articles in TIMBERTIMES numbers 6, 7, and 8. The fencing and planking are Ky. Allen's scale lumber; the roofs are scribed balsa wood. However, the machine shop roof was covered with feathers in Scale corrugated metal roofing material, weathered in ochre and dusted with chalks. The outdoor cars from Gracelli Line and the skates were cast in Grandt Line hinges. Ray used Tamiya acrylic paints thinned with rubbing alcohol to stain the bedding.

Below: Small Western clean up the engine house at the end of the day. On layout in and around the engine facilities are Sunset Models, Ltd. and Phoenix – some were factory painted, but most were hand-painted. She prefer by painting their figures. Ray used Walters Scale Models machinery, and C.H.R., Bachelor Valley, and Sunset Models detail parts in the engine house and machine shop. The rail engines and rail cars were also built from C.H.R. kits. Right: Geoff illustrates the interiors of the engine house and shop.

Below: A worker does some maintenance at the engine house. Note the Tamiya paint inside the open door of the machine shop.

Left:
Shay #1 hauls empty log cars back to the woods. Here she is crossing the Longview Bridge on the Cascade Falls line. See cars just Ash Brook, in Shinglebrook Manor, and the one on the top of the company's house, and the ones behind the log train and a four-wheel work caboose.

THE On3

RED STAG LUMBER COMPANY

PART 3:

ENGINE FACILITIES AND MOTIVE POWER

By Michael Flack, Geoff Nott, Steve Pettit, and Ray Walther

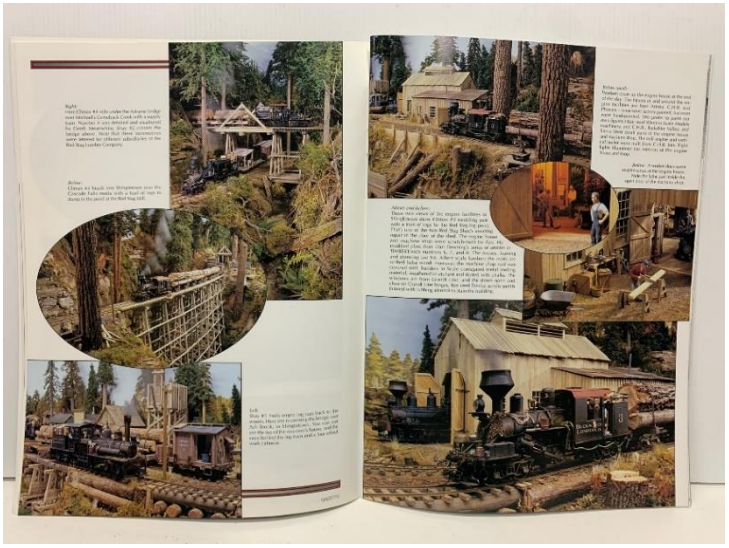
Photos by Geoff Nott

In this part we describe the engine facilities and motive power on our portable logging diorama. This layout came to be after the four of us – all living in Sydney, Australia – decided to freelance an On3 logging layout based on railroads that once ran on the West Coast of the U.S. Our motto was "As good as it gets."

In part 1 (March/April 2001), we described Buckwater Landing and the Tall Timber Camp section built by Steve. Part 2 concentrated on our scenery techniques, and was illustrated with views of lumber trestles, trees and ground cover at Falls Creek, Comstock Creek and the Longview Bridge/Cascade Falls sections built by Geoff, Michael and Steve respectively.

Here we will use positions to describe Shinglebrook its engine facilities, built primarily by Ray, and show the variety of motive power that runs between the Buckwater Landing logging site and the Red Stag Sawmill. We have two Climaxes – somewhere, two Shays, a Porter 0-4-0T and a railcar. Our rolling stock was mostly scratch-built, but Michael modified some Bachmann On30 equipment to use on On3. For operation, we use "O2" controllers, which are made locally in Sydney, and a direct block control system.

In the fourth and final part of this series, in the next issue, Geoff will describe the Red Stag Sawmill. ■



2004-2006

On3 Toadcroak Flume & Lumber Co.

https://nmra.org.au/toad-croak-flume-lumber-company-on3/

After the final showing of the "Red Stag" I continued to work on my home layout where I'd scratchbuilt many structures that I'd planned on working into this layout.

Unfortunately a house move meant that I lost access to the space and had to revise my long-term modelling plans.

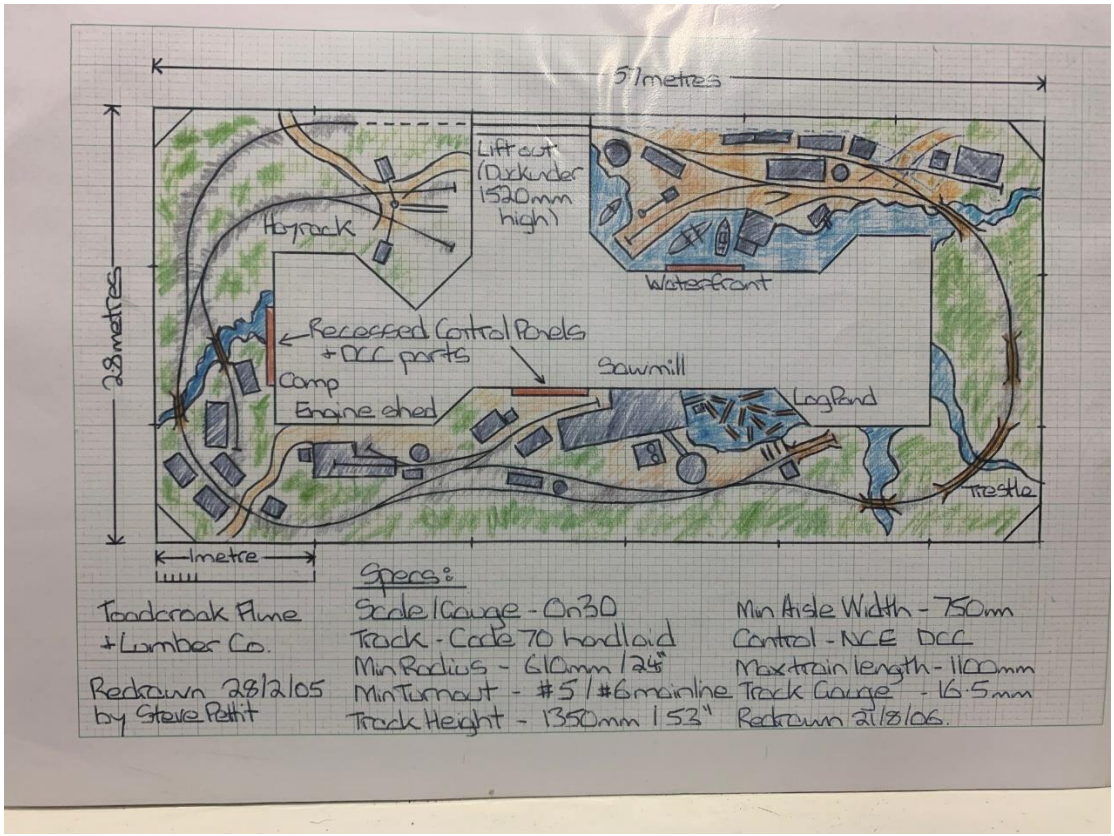
After some discussions with Dave Revelia who was the founder of the "Suncoast Centre for Fine Scale Modelling" my scratchbuilt sawmill was packed carefully and shipped across to Florida USA to be featured in Dave's collection of finescale modelling. Interesting to note that my sawmill was shipped in the same container as Dan Pickards & John Hunters On30 Dolly Varden layout that was also bound for Florida

https://www.finescalemodeling.org/

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0AvIh919YK4Jra-Eqb006g

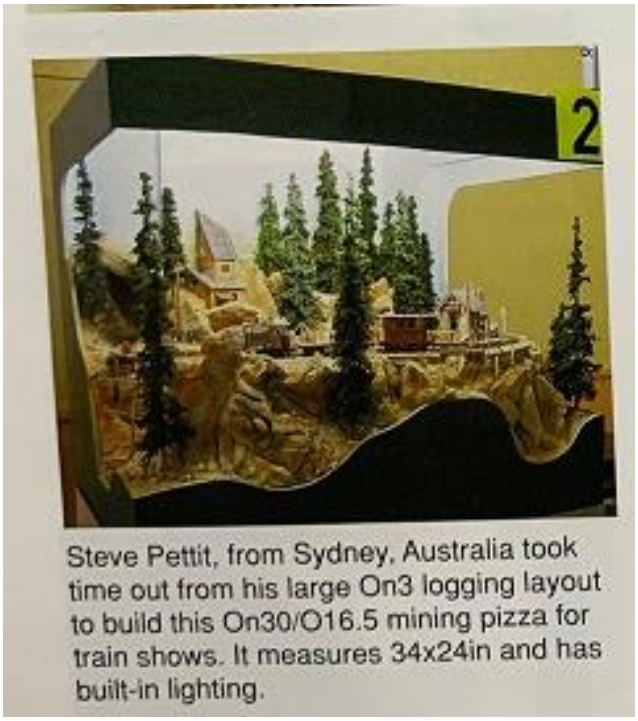
T.F.&L.Co.
7

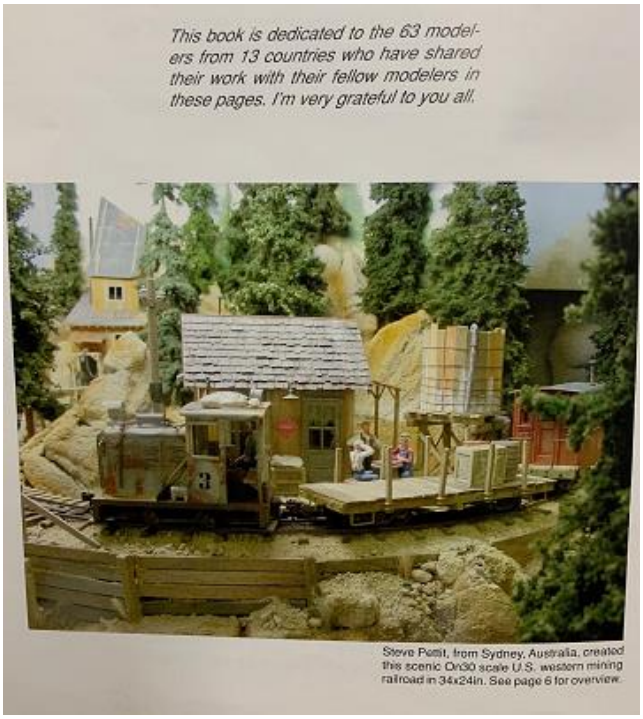
WESTERN UNION
Telegraph
& CABLE OFFICE


51metres
28metres
1metre
Lift out
(Duckunder
1520mm
high)
Haytrack
Waterfront
Recessed Control Panels
+ DCC ports
Sawmill
Camp
Engine shed
Log Pond
Trestle
Specs:
Scale/Gauge - On30
Track - Code 70 handlaid
Min Radius - 610mm/24"
Min Turnout - #5/#6 mainline
Track Height - 1350mm/53"
Min Aisle Width - 750mm
Control - NCE DCC
Max train length - 1100mm
Track Gauge - 16.5mm
Redrawn 21/8/06.
Toadcreek Flume
+ Lumber Co.
Redrawn 28/2/05
by Steve Pettit

2006

On30 Micro Layout


2
Steve Pettit, from Sydney, Australia took time out from his large On3 logging layout to build this On30/O16.5 mining pizza for train shows. It measures 34x24in and has built-in lighting.


This book is dedicated to the 63 modelers from 13 countries who have shared their work with their fellow modelers in these pages. I'm very grateful to you all.
Steve Pettit, from Sydney, Australia, created this scenic On30 scale U.S. western mining railroad in 34x24in. See page 6 for overview.

In the interim, Bachmann had just released its line of On30 locos and rollingstock which opened up the narrow-gauge side of the hobby for many more modelers. I took advantage of my lack of space and built a small "Micro Layout" utilizing an On30 Gas mechanical critter and 2-3 Chivers Fineline (UK) short wheelbase rolling stock. The layout was featured in Carl Arendt micro layouts Scrapbook and was ultimately acquired by a model supply store on the Gold Coast QLD

2007-2009

HO CP Ottertail Canyon

https://nmra.org.au/steve-pettit-mmr/

https://cprailmmsub.blogspot.com/2017/05/the-ottertail-canyon-great-canadian.html

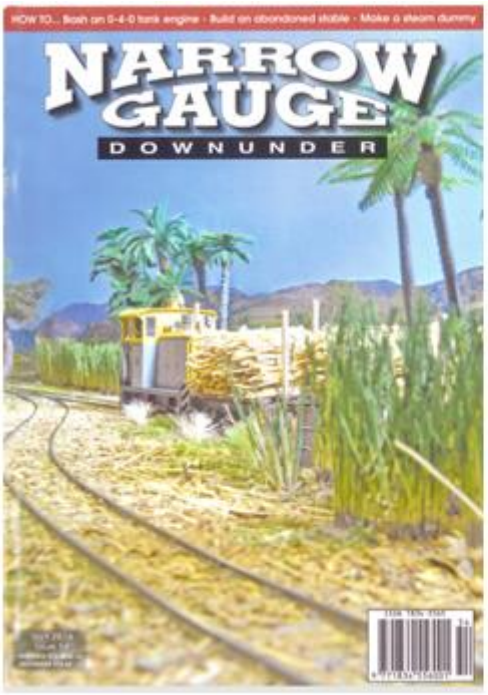
I was commissioned by a fellow modeller who had neither the time / skill / resources or experience to build a layout himself. His interest was the Canadian Rockies and the Canadian Pacific (CP Rail) in particular. I agreed to build the layout on his behalf on the condition that it could be exhibited publicly prior to installation at his home. The cost of additional materials and time to build the exhibition ready stands / staging tracks etc was on me, but I was OK with that. I took the layout to several model railroad exhibitions where my use of extruded aluminum framing and

extruded polystyrene foam roadbed and scenery attracted plenty of attention. The client lost interest a year or so later and asked me to sell the layout to cover my time & costs. It was an interesting / challenging yet rewarding exercise from start to finish and taught me a lot

Springwood Model Railway Exhibtion
March 17th and March 18th 2007
ST THOMAS AQUINAS PRIMARY SCHOOL
168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW
Admission: Family $25
Adult $10
child & Concession $5
Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm
& Sunday 9:30am - 4:00pm
doors close 30 mins
before show ends
CPRail
5019
*Courtesy bus from Springwood Railway Station
Major Trade Suppliers, Mini Z Scale to Gauge 1 for the garden,
Historical Societies, Modelling Demonstrations,
"Ride on" Thomas "U-Drive" Thomas
www.springwoodtrainshow.com
contactus@springwoodtrainshow.com

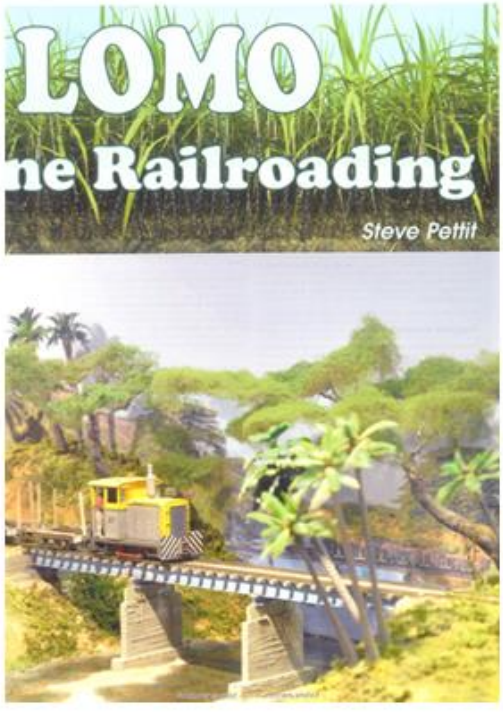
2012-2013

On30 "Lomo Lomo" – Refer NGDU



In the lead up to the 2013 Australian Narrow-Gauge Convention to be held in Melbourne, I decided to build a compact but detailed layout in On30 depicting the 2ft gauge Sugar Cane lines in Fiji following several family holidays to the main island. The layout was constructed in less than 3 months but presented well and taught me a few techniques on how best to represent sugar cane using straw brooms.

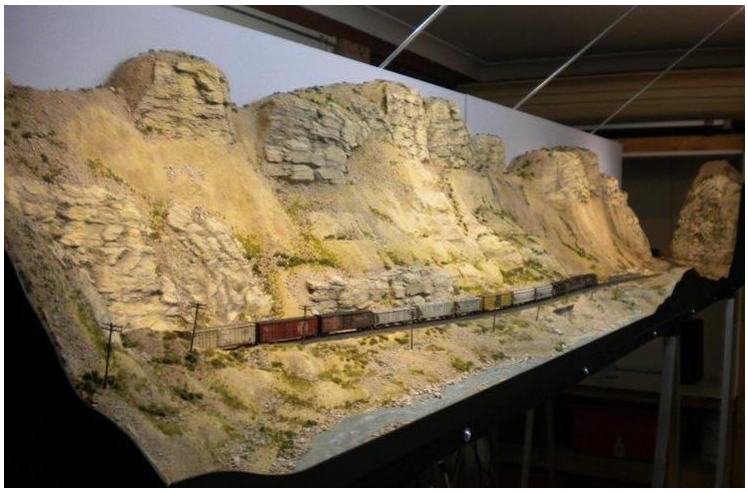
LOMO
On30 Fijian Ca
Early in January 2013 Grant McAdam asked me what modelling I planned to take to the Australian Narrow Gauge Convention 2013 in Melbourne. At that point the convention was only 12 weeks away but I decided to get working on a layout depicting the two-foot gauge sugar cane lines of Fiji.
The attraction of Fijian cane railways stemmed from a family holiday to Fiji in 2012. We arrived two weeks after major flooding, and many of the bridges and trackage had been washed away. Even though it was outside of the crushing season I did however manage to find a few locations where the right of way was still intact. The locals weren't keen for me to photograph the damaged infrastructure, as they thought the floods had brought more than enough bad publicity to the country and tourism was affected as a result!
As soon as I got home I ordered a copy of Ian Dunn's book, "Clyde among the Cane" (Eveleigh Press) from the ARHS. Ian's book is a great visual record of the cane operations and scenery on Fiji's main island, Viti Levu.
For more inspiration and photographs, I also referred to Lynn Zelmer's CaneSIG website, www.zelmerco.com/canesig. Between these sources, I set out to capture the essence of sugar cane railways in Fiji.

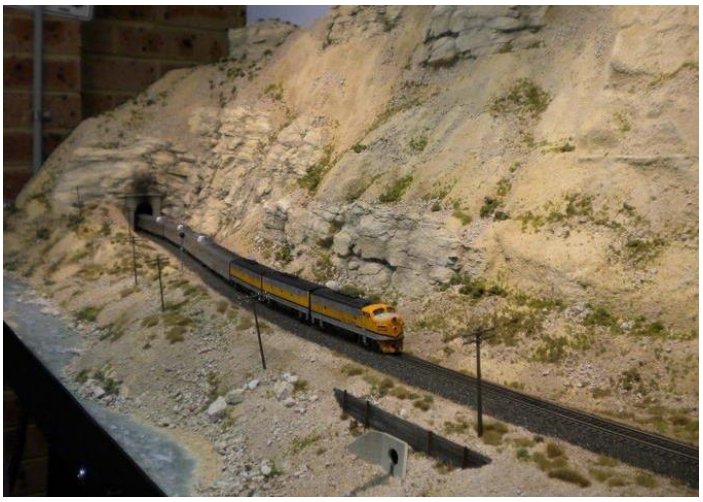


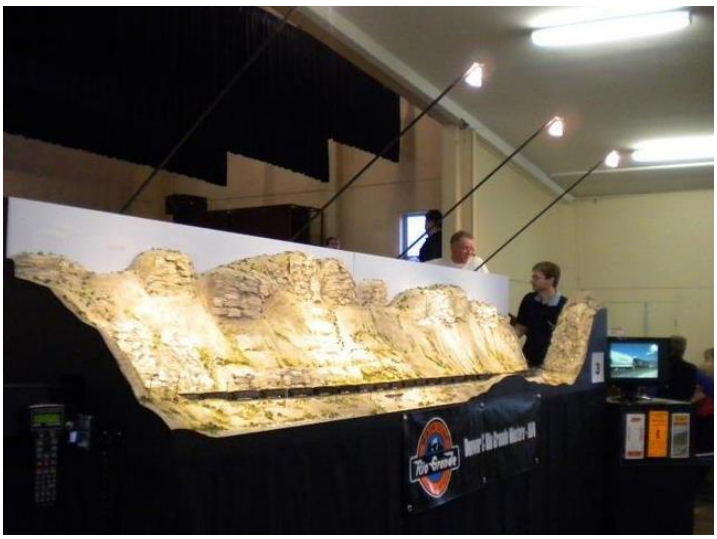
2013-2015

D&RGW N Scale – Utah Division

With my available modelling space somewhat restricted, I dug out a heap of my pre 1990's Rio Grande locos and rollingstock and built a sectional layout depicting the D&RGW main line thru Utah. Since I was a youngster just getting into trains, I had a huge interest in the Rio Grande and the challenges it faced, and this gained momentum as I did more prototype research into the railroad. Although I quickly discovered that my old locos & rolling stock didn't pass muster in terms of operation & level of current detail, I gradually replaced and upgraded with new Atlas / Kato & Intermountain motive power and enjoyed weathering and detailing my rolling stock to as high a standard as possible

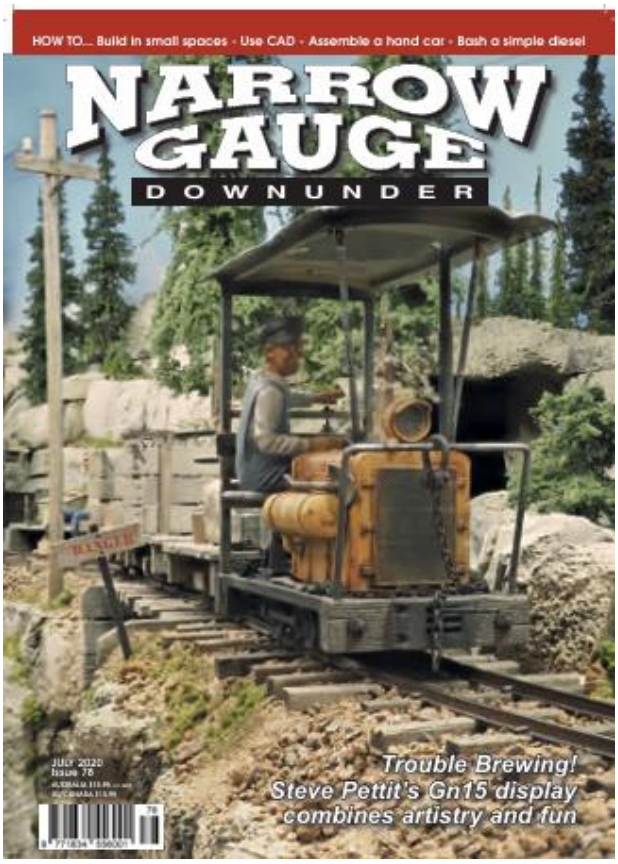


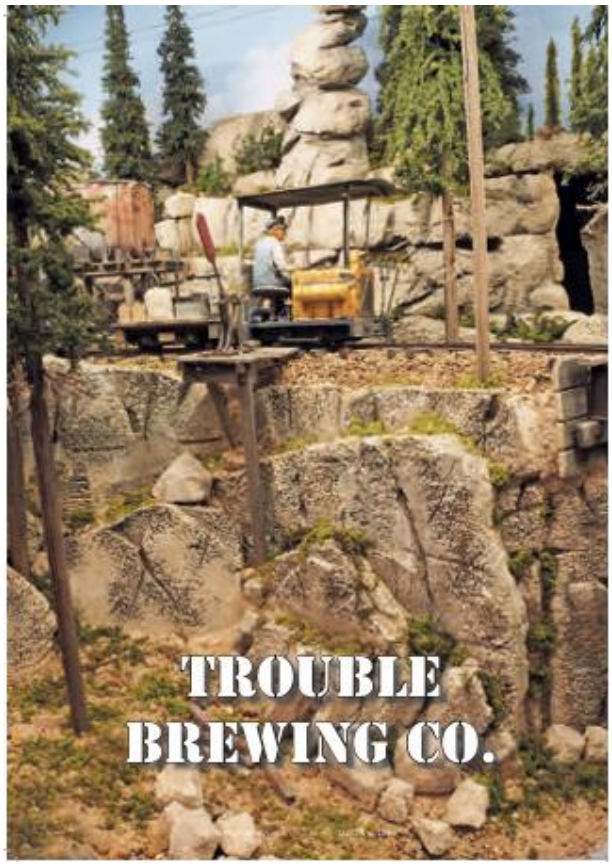




2019-2024

Gn15 Trouble Brewing Co.


HOW TO... Build in small spaces - Use CAD - Assemble a hand car - Bash a simple diesel
NARROW GAUGE
DOWNUNDER
JULY 2020
Issue 78
Trouble Brewing!
Steve Pettit's Gn15 display combines artistry and fun



AN EXPERIMENT IN LARGE SCALE MODELLING ON A SMALL SCALE

by Steve Pettit

BACKGROUND

I have been dabbling and dawdling in Gn15 scale for about 15 years. Much of the journey has explored rundown "I could have been" railroad ideas.

My modelling and layout progress has been sporadic - I recall that I reclaimed a bird's "coffee" into the Diesel Locomotive Category with back at the 2005 Australian Narrow Gauge Convention in Melbourne. Talk about losing my mind...

A GN15 PRIMER

For those who aren't aware, Gn15 is a name little scale to represent "minimum gauge" railways. It seems a combination that folks around the world have a bit of fun with.

Gn15 combines 1:13.3 with the 15.8mm / 16.5mm track gauge used for HO and OO9. Some variants use scales of 1:20.3 and 1:22.5, but all are considered "Gn15" in the broader sense. There is an online community called "The Brotherhood" (www.http://forums.gn15.info/) where adherents share their modelling ideas and work. Several Gn15 layouts can also be viewed on the Micro Layout Forum (www.http://www.combrail.com/).

LAYOUT CONCEPT

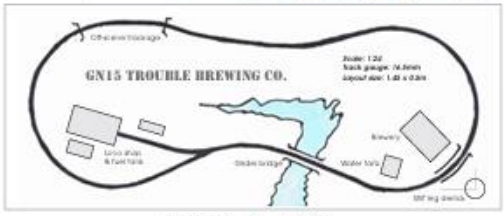
I was pottering along with development of my small Gn15 layout, "Trouble Brewing Co." for a long time. The loose prototype was a backing brewery that used high mountain creek water to make the namesake carbonated. The 15" gauge railroad is used to transport the malt down to where it can be unloaded and/or recreated by the Foundrik.

With plenty of time in hand, I committed to display the layout at the Australian Narrow Gauge Convention at Bendigo New South Wales in April 2019. Then, a sporting injury in November 2018 forced me to reassess the time I had remaining, and what I thought I could achieve. The layout remained there is a massive compromise on what I originally planned - but sometimes life gets in the way of the hobby.

I initially designed the layout to be twice the length of the existing railway! This was to have all functional track with a point-to-point design. Each end of the track was to be fitted with double "bays" of a fixed length for reliability - would power off then and until someone switch was thrown to send it back.

The revised layout concept was a continuous loop, with functional track only in the station areas. The continuous loop concept works OK since the loop is partially hidden and it's not so obvious that a train is "chasing its tail". In the interests of having something I could complete before the convention, that's what I went with...

LAYOUT CONSTRUCTION



2023-2024

HOn3 Chamatiago & Southwestern

Will James – YouTube channel (layout featured from 1hr:35mins)

https://youtu.be/VNvY1UuObtM?si=ahd4WaFwBVozMd1l

CHAMATIAGO & SOUTHWESTERN

SINCE 1941 COLORADO

HOn3 Layout Description:

This layout is a freelance representation loosely based on and inspired by the rugged terrain of the Silverton Branch line following the Animas River COLORADO during the 1940's and has taken almost a year to build to this stage of completion.

This is the very first time the layout has been exhibited

The layout framework was constructed using 25mm extruded aluminium framing over which high density insulation foam was used to support the scenery. The foam was carved and shaped using a hot knife with a scenery base of Chux cloths and Gyprock Topping Compound applied.

All staging, trestles and supports were also built from the same extruded aluminium due to its strength and light weight.

Lighting is a combination of warm white and daylight LED strips fixed to the inside top of the valance.

The vertical rockfaces were cast and detailed as separate scenic sections made of 3mm plywood before being fixed in place on the layout.

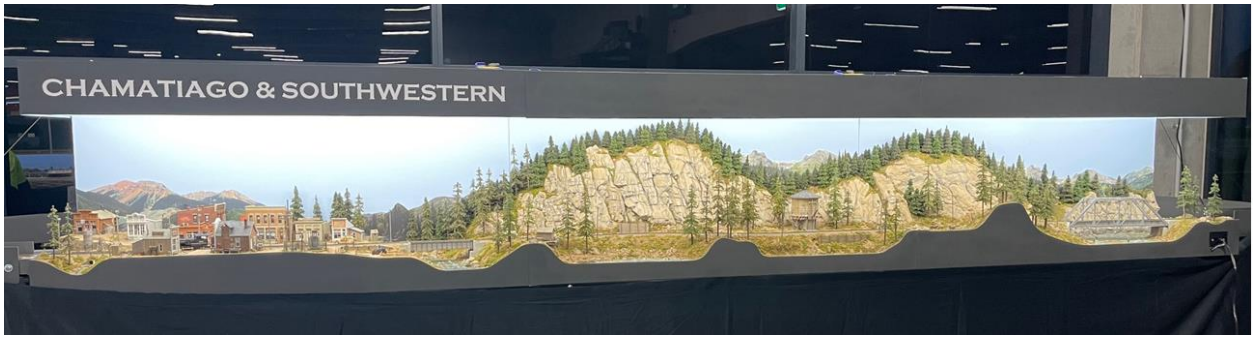
The backdrop is a collage made up from photos I took last time I rode the Durango to Silverton Railroad.

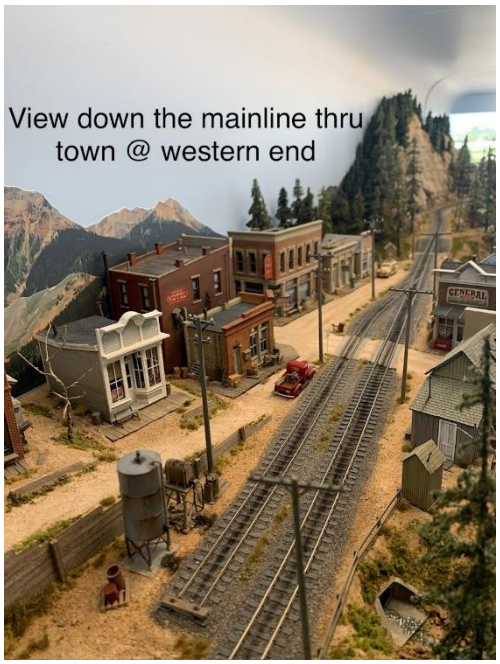
Track is Micro Engineering Code 55 flex track, that is very close to a scale representation of the lightweight rail used on many Colorado narrow gauge lines. Track is laid onto 2mm cork, then airbrushed, ballasted and weathered.

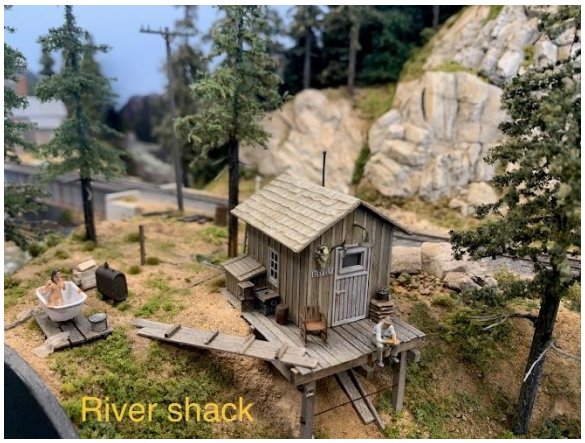
All locos and rolling stock and structures are detailed and weathered to reflect the era and terrain. I scratchbuilt several of the structures over 25 years ago and with some recent "upgrade & repair work" have included them on the layout.

Control is NCE DCC with locos fitted with sound decoders. Steam is the predominant motive power, however several "Galloping Geese" typical of the Rio Grande Southern are also utilised as passenger traffic dwindled in this era.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask any of the operating crew who have examples of scenery construction & techniques and progress photos on hand to explain how this layout was built.


CHAMATIAGO & SOUTHWESTERN


View down the mainline thru
town @ western end

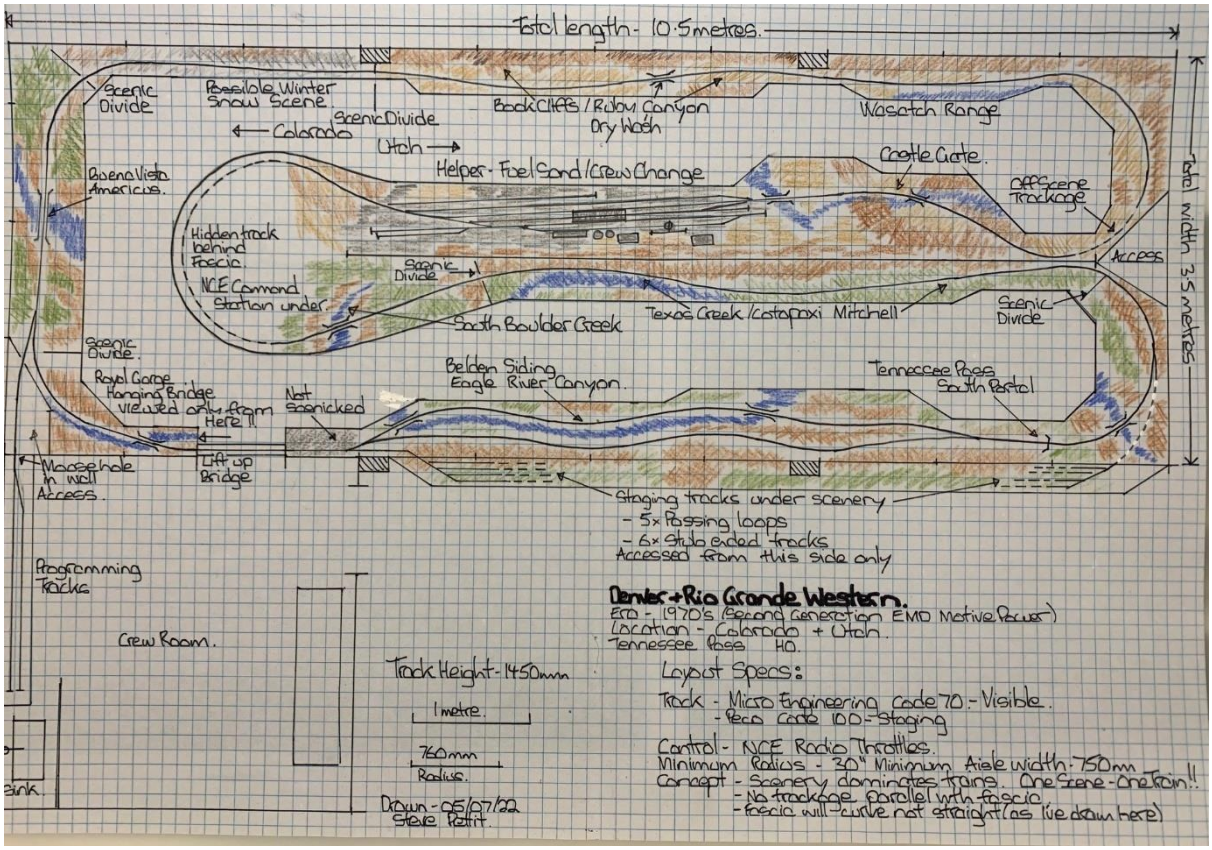

River shack

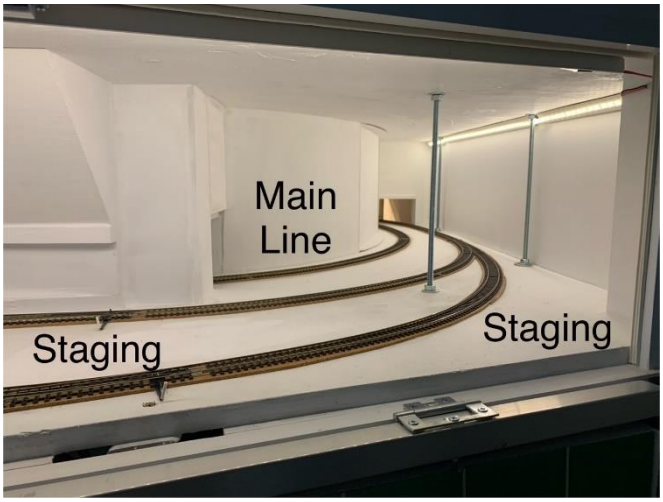
2021 -

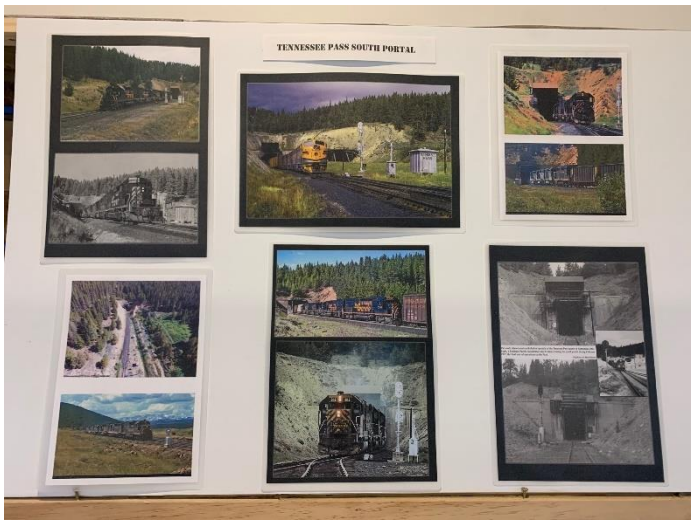
HO D&RGW Tennessee Pass & Utah Division – Current home layout

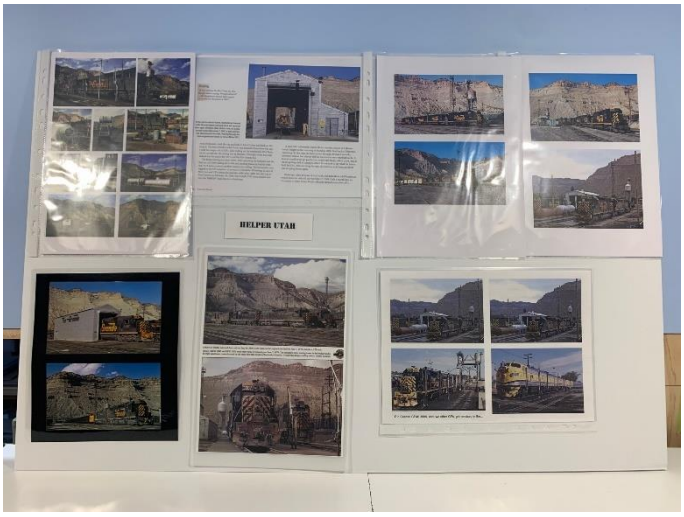
https://www.instagram.com/stevepettit_riogrande/profilecard/?igsh=bHdvaGVnOHd6aWQz

https://forum.mrhmag.com/post/rio-grande-tennessee-pass-'78-13516020?trail=25


Total length - 10.5 metres.
Total width 3.5 metres
Scenic Divide
Possible Winter Snow Scene
Scenic Divide
Colorado
Utah
Book Cliffs / Ruby Canyon Dry Wash
Wasatch Range
Helper - Fuel/Sand/Crew Change
Castle Gate.
Offscene Trackage
Access
Buena Vista Americus.
Hidden track behind fascia.
NCE Command Station under.
Scenic Divide
South Boulder Creek
Texas Creek / Castaparxi Mitchell
Scenic Divide
Scenic Divide.
Royal Gorge Hanging Bridge viewed only from Here !!
Not Scenicked
Belden Siding Eagle River Canyon.
Tennessee Pass South Portal
Manhole in wall Access.
Lift up Bridge
Staging tracks under scenery
- 5x Passing loops
- 6x Stub ended tracks
Accessed from this side only
Programming Tracks
Crew Room.
Denver + Rio Grande Western.
Era - 1970's (Second Generation EMD Motive Power)
Location - Colorado + Utah.
Tennessee Pass HO.
Track Height - 1450mm
1 metre.
760mm Radius.
Layout Specs:
Track - Micro Engineering Code 70 - Visible.
- Peco Code 100 - Staging
Control - NCE Radio Throttles.
Minimum Radius - 30" Minimum Aisle width - 750mm
Concept - Scenery dominates trains. One Scene - One Train!!
- No trackage parallel with fascia
- fascia will curve not straight (as I've drawn here)
Drawn - 05/07/22
Steve Pettit.


Main
Line
Staging
Staging


TENNESSEE PASS SOUTH PORTAL


HELPER UTAH

UTAH DESERT - WASATCH RANGE
Rio Grande In Color
Volume 2 Utah